

# **Handout 1.1: Vision for the HealthierUS School Challenge**

## ***Recognizing Excellence in Nutrition and Physical Activity***

### **Background**

The HealthierUS School Challenge (HUSSC) was established to recognize schools that are creating healthier school environments through their promotion of good nutrition and physical activity. Four levels of superior performance are awarded: Bronze, Silver, Gold, and Gold of Distinction.

To qualify for the awards, a school must submit a formal application and meet basic criteria set forth by the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS). The HUSSC criteria reflect the recommendations of the *2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans*, and the Institute of Medicine (IOM) published recommendations (April 2007) for foods that should be served in schools, outside of the organized school lunch meals. HealthierUS Schools must also have a local school wellness policy as mandated by Congress. Local school wellness policies support the HUSSC initiative and affirm that schools play a critical role in promoting student health, preventing childhood obesity, and combating problems associated with poor nutrition and physical inactivity.

### **Goal**

The overarching goal of the HUSSC is to improve the health of the nation's children by promoting healthier school environments. To help meet the goal, FNS identifies schools that have made changes to the school nutrition environment to (1) improve the quality of the foods served, (2) provide students with nutrition education and (3) provide students with physical education and opportunities for physical activity. Ultimately, FNS would like to see all schools receive a HUSSC award.

### **Guiding Principles**

- Schools receiving a HUSSC award will commit to meeting the criteria throughout their certification period.
- Schools will meet all the School Meals Initiative (SMI) requirements including energy and nutrient standards and age-appropriate portion sizes on an ongoing basis.
- Schools will serve reimbursable meals that reflect good menu planning principles, such as serving a variety of healthier foods that look good, taste good, and appeal to the cultural sensitivities of the school and community populations.
- Schools will plan meals that emphasize fruits, vegetables, whole grains and fat-free or low-fat milk and milk products; that include lean meats, poultry, fish, beans, eggs, and nuts; and that are low in saturated fats, *trans* fats, cholesterol, salt (sodium), and added sugars.
- Schools will offer foods that ensure that students can select a meal that meets all the HUSSC criteria. Such foods should be routinely selected by students, not just token foods to meet HUSSC criteria.

**Handout 1.2: Criteria of the HealthierUS School Challenge**  
**Comparison for All Schools**  
**2-23-2010**

| HealthierUS School Challenge Criteria   | Award Level General Requirements                         |  |   |   |
|---|--|--|---|---|
|   | Bronze   | Silver   | Gold  | Gold Award of Distinction                                 |
| <b>1. School enrolled as a Team Nutrition (TN) school.</b>  | √  | √  | √   | √   |
| <b>2. Reimbursable lunches meet the USDA nutrition standards</b><br><i>School district had an School Meals Initiative (SMI) review within 5 years and all corrective actions have been completed.</i>   | √  | √  | √   | √   |
| <b>3. Average Daily Participation for lunch meets or exceeds a minimum.</b><br>a. Elementary Schools<br>b. Middle Schools<br>c. High Schools  | N/A<br>N/A<br>N/A  | 60%<br>60%<br>45%  | 70%<br>70%<br>65%   | 70%<br>70%<br>65%   |
| <b>4. School lunch menu allows students to select each of the food items listed below.</b>  | √  | √  | √   | √   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A <b>different vegetable</b> every day of the week. All servings must be at least ¼ cup. Of these five:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. <b>Dark green or orange</b> vegetables offered 3 or more days per week (of the 3, at least 2 must be different)</li> <li>b. <b>Cooked dry beans or peas</b> (legumes) must be offered each week (includes canned dry beans and peas).</li> </ul> </li> </ul> | √<br>√<br>√  | √<br>√<br>√  | √<br>√<br>√   | √<br>√<br>√   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A <b>different fruit</b> every day of the week (fresh, frozen, canned, dried, or 100% juice). All servings must be at least ¼ cup. <i>Dried fruit must have no added sweetener (nutritive or non-nutritive); canned fruit must be packed in juice or light syrup.</i></li> </ul>   | √<br>plus<br>1 day/week<br>fruit must be served<br>fresh | √<br>plus<br>1 day/week<br>fruit must be served<br>fresh | √<br>plus<br>2 days/week<br>fruit must be served<br>fresh | √<br>plus<br>2 days/week<br>fruit must be served<br>fresh |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>100% juice can be counted as a fruit only once per week.</li> </ul>  | √  | √  | √   | √   |

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|--|---|---|---|---|
|  | Bronze  | Silver  | Gold  | Gold Award of Distinction   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A <b>whole-grain foods</b> serving. A <i>serving size of whole-grain food is equal to a serving of Grains/Bread as defined in the Food Buying Guide, pages 3.15-3.16. The majority of whole-grain food products served must have the whole grain(s) listed first in the ingredient statement. Other whole-grain servings must have whole grain as the primary grain ingredient.</i></li> </ul>  | At least 1 serving of whole-grain food offered 3 or more days per week (not the same one each day)  | At least 1 serving of whole-grain food offered 3 or more days per week (not the same one each day)  | At least 1 serving of whole-grain food offered each day (not the same one each day)                 | At least 1 serving of whole-grain food offered each day (not the same one each day)                 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Only <b>low-fat (1% or less)</b> and <b>fat-free (skim) fluid milk</b>, flavored or unflavored, offered each day.</li> </ul>  | √   | √   | √   | √   |
| <p><b>5. If the school sells any other food and beverages on campus (competitive foods), sales must meet the criteria below, as well as the restricted times and locations stated at the right.</b></p> <p><i>Competitive foods are defined as any foods or beverages sold in competition with reimbursable meals. This includes a la carte, vending, snack bar, school store, and/or any other food and beverage sales on campus.</i></p> <p><b>Seconds or extra sales of entrees offered as part of the day's reimbursable lunches are exempt.</b></p> | <p>The criteria apply during meal periods within the foodservice area(s)*</p> <p><i>*Foodservice area(s) refers to any area on school premises where program meals are served and/or eaten.</i></p> | <p>The criteria apply during meal periods within the foodservice area(s)*</p> <p><i>*Foodservice area(s) refers to any area on school premises where program meals are served and/or eaten.</i></p> | The criteria apply throughout the school day (including meal periods), throughout the school campus | The criteria apply throughout the school day (including meal periods), throughout the school campus |
| <p><b>6. Competitive food and beverages must meet the following criteria:</b></p> <p><b>Competitive Foods:</b></p> <p>a. <b>Total fat:</b> Calories from total fat must be at or below 35% per serving. <i>Excludes nuts, seeds, nut butters, and reduced-fat cheese.</i></p> <p>b. <b>Trans fat:</b> Less than 0.5 grams (<i>trans</i> fat free) per serving</p> <p>c. <b>Saturated fat:</b> Calories from saturated fat must be below 10% per serving. <i>Excludes reduced-fat cheese.</i></p>   | √<br><br><br>√<br><br><br>√   | √<br><br><br>√<br><br><br>√   | √<br><br><br>√<br><br><br>√   | √<br><br><br>√<br><br><br>√   |

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|---|---|---|---|--|
|   | Bronze  | Silver  | Gold  | Gold Award of Distinction  |
| <p><i>d. Sugar:</i> Total sugar must be at or below 35% by weight (includes naturally occurring and added sugars). <i>Excludes fruits, vegetables, and milk.</i></p> <p><i>e. Sodium:</i> See information at right for sodium limits.</p> <p><i>f. Portion size/Calories:</i> Not to exceed the serving size of the food served in the NSLP; for other items, the package or container is not to exceed 200 calories.</p> <p><b>Competitive Beverages: Only the following beverages are allowed.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Milk:</b> Only low-fat (1% or less) and fat-free (skim), flavored or unflavored fluid milk, and/or USDA approved alternative dairy beverages; <i>limit serving size to maximum of 8 fluid ounces.</i></li> <li>100% full strength <b>fruit &amp; vegetable juices</b> with no sweeteners (nutritive or non-nutritive); <i>limit serving size to maximum of 6 fluid ounces for elementary and middle schools and 8 fluid ounces for high schools.</i></li> <li><b>Water;</b> unflavored, no sweeteners (nutritive or non-nutritive), noncarbonated, caffeine-free.</li> </ul> | <p>√</p> <p>≤ 480 mg sodium per non-entrée;<br/>≤ 600 mg per entrée</p> | <p>√</p> <p>≤ 480 mg sodium per non-entrée;<br/>≤ 600 mg per entrée</p> | <p>√</p> <p>≤ 480 mg sodium per non-entrée;<br/>≤ 600 mg per entrée</p> | <p>√</p> <p>≤ 200 mg sodium per non-entrée;<br/>≤ 480 mg per entrée<br/>OR<br/>Physical Education is 150 minutes/week for elementary schools</p> |
| <p><b>7. Nutrition education:</b><br/> <b>Elementary Schools</b></p> <p>a. Is provided for at least half, but no fewer than two, of the grade levels in the school. If the school consists of a single grade, nutrition education is provided to all students in the school.</p> <p>b. Is part of a structured and systematic unit of</p>   | <p>√</p>  | <p>√</p>  | <p>√</p>  | <p>√</p>   |

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|--|---|---|---|--|
|  | Bronze  | Silver  | Gold  | Gold Award of Distinction  |
| Instruction, such as <i>MyPyramid</i> lessons from Team Nutrition.   | √   | √   | √   | √  |
| c. Involves multiple channels of communication, including the classroom, cafeteria, and home/parents.                            | √   | √   | √   | √  |
| d. Messages are reinforced by prohibiting the use of food as a reward (school holiday parties are excluded).                     | √   | √   | √   | √  |
| <b>Secondary Schools</b>   |   |   |   |  |
| a. Offered to middle school students in at least one grade level as part of required year round instruction.                     | √   | √   | √   | √  |
| b. Offered to high school students in 2 courses required for graduation.   | √   | √   | √   | √  |
| c. Involves multiple channels of communication.  | √   | √   | √   | √  |
| d. Messages are reinforced by prohibiting the use of food as a reward (school holiday parties are excluded).                     | √   | √   | √   | √  |
| <b>8. Physical education/activity is promoted by:</b>  |   |   |   |  |
| <b>Elementary Schools</b>  |   |   |   |  |
| a. Providing structured physical education classes for <b>all</b> full-day students throughout the school year.                  | A minimum average of 45 minutes per week throughout the school year | A minimum average of 45 minutes per week throughout the school year | A minimum average of 90 minutes per week throughout the school year | A minimum average of 150 minutes per week throughout the school year<br>OR<br>meet stricter sodium requirements plus a minimum average of 90 minutes per week throughout the school year |
| b. Providing unstructured daily opportunities for physical activity for all full-day students, such as recess.                   | √   | √   | √   | √  |
| c. Reinforcing physical activity education messages by neither denying nor requiring physical activity as a means of punishment. | √   | √   | √   | √  |

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| <b>HealthierUS School Challenge Criteria</b>   | <b>Award Level General Requirements</b> |               |             |                                  |
|--|---|---------------|-------------|----------------------------------|
|  | <b>Bronze</b>                           | <b>Silver</b> | <b>Gold</b> | <b>Gold Award of Distinction</b> |
| <b>Secondary Schools</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Offer structured physical education classes to at least two grades and provide students in all grades opportunities to participate in physical activity (intramural/interscholastic sports or activity clubs) throughout the school year.</li> <li>b. In addition, actively promote participation in physical activities (in and out of school) to all students.</li> <li>c. Reinforcing physical activity education messages by neither denying nor requiring physical activity as a means of punishment.</li> </ul> | √                                       | √             | √           | √                                |
| 9. School policies support a wellness environment by permitting primarily nonfood items being sold through school <b>fundraising activities</b> . However, if food items are sold during the school day, they must meet the guidelines for competitive foods, as outlined in this chart.   | √                                       | √             | √           | √                                |
| 10. The school district has developed a <b>Wellness Policy</b> . A copy of the Wellness Policy is submitted with the application.  | √                                       | √             | √           | √                                |